

Historic Landmarks

THE NATIONAL STATE BANK BUILDING

It is affectionately known today as the "Toga", or the Saratoga Restaurant at the southwest corner of Fifth and Wabash Avenue in downtown Terre Haute. The original use for the building constructed in 1867 was to house the offices of the National State Bank of Indiana. The bank had been formed just two years earlier to replace the local branch of the State Bank of Indiana located on the south side of Ohio Street between Second and Third Streets.

The property the building sets on was purchased from the James Ramdon family for \$3500. The building was constructed by T. B. Snapp.

The building was home for the National State Bank of Indiana the entire 38 years of its existence. It was also home for the reorganized bank known as the Terre Haute National Bank until September 7, 1927. It was that year that the Terre Haute National Bank merged with the United States Trust Company

TS MAY 30 1986

located where the main office of Terre Haute First National Bank is located today. The bank then moved its operations to that structure.

The building at 5th and Wabash was leased to Winfield S. Kable in 1931 for use as a tire shop. It was Kable that turned the tire shop into a restaurant and used it as such for eight years. In 1936, Tony Hulman purchased the building and leased it to Kable.

In 1942, George Nasser opened the Saratoga Restaurant and Bar in the location and operated there until the fall of that same year when Joe Malooley bought him out. Abe Malooley, Joe's brother, came to manage the Saratoga in 1945. In 1965, Abe became partners with Joe and in 1972 took over complete management of the restaurant and bar.

The building is currently owned by Abe Malooley who purchased it in 1979 from Hulman and Company.

Community Affairs File

(Saratoga)

The National State Bank Building

Vigo County Public Library

REFERENCE
DO NOT CIRCULATE

New Goshen School Struggling To Survive

Community Affairs File

Historic Landmarks (H)
Nacksville
by Theresa Jacobs
Gazette 7-22-82

Situated just behind the firehouse off Highway 150 in New Goshen is a little two room brick school house, possibly the oldest in Vigo County.

Built in 1888 as an elementary school to serve New Goshen and surrounding areas, it still stands and, thanks to the efforts of the County Park Department, it has been restored to its original character and style. The antique desks, the pot-bellied stove and old slate blackboards all effectively depict a time long past.

Up until last year the little brick school house would come to life during the Banks of the Wabash Festival, when retired teachers and children from New Goshen would recreate scenes of how reading writing and arithmetic used to be taught for visitors. This has, however, been discontinued according to Mrs. Dorothy Whitesell, a New Goshen resident who has been in large part responsible for preserving the old school house since 1955. In 1955 the school ceased operating as an educational facility. Since that time it seems the school has been repeatedly in danger of being destroyed. Many people have worked to keep that from happening, but Mrs Whitesell apparently has

always been the motivating force behind efforts to keep the school.

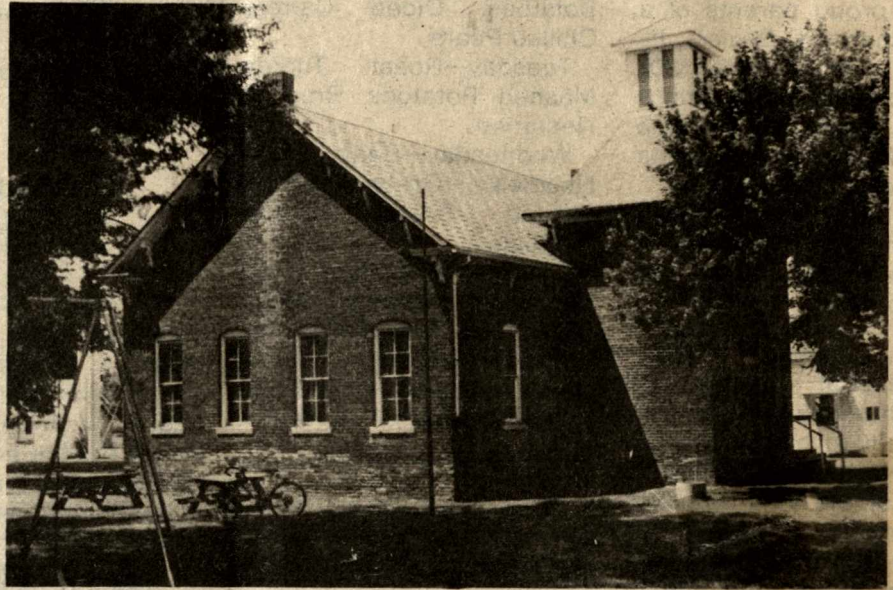
In 1969 the school board tried to sell the property; they put it on the market for \$2500. Apparently there were no takers. Fearing that the building, now in total disrepair, would be

restored the building. One room was restored to its original 1888 classroom condition while the other room was fixed up to be used as a meeting place for local people.

It has taken considerable time and efforts of those wishing to retain the school to

Whitesell, the school is again in danger of being destroyed, and she is not sure who to ask for help this time.

The Parks Department no longer can afford to maintain the buiding. "Vandalism is a problem since there is no longer a caretaker to maintain the property," said Mrs.



demolished, Mrs. Whitesell asked the school board to consider donating the property to the Parks Department. She also wrote letters to Keith Ruble of the Parks Department asking for his help.

In 1970 the school board approved the transfer of the little brick school house to the County Parks Department. The Parks Department then totally remodeled and

keep it going this long. Numerous newspaper articles have been written about it. WTWO did an editorial about it in 1973.

Birch Bayh visited the old school in 1974, which is said to be where his mother taught for a time, and presented it with an American Flag from the Capitol. Retired teachers have worked diligently to try to preserve this bit of heritage.

But now, according to Mrs.

Whitesell. She has tried to interest the Historical Society in the buiding but they too are financially unable to accept the responsibility.

Mrs. Whitesell, who attended the school back in 1913, is hoping that someone, either former students, civic groups, or just someone interested in preserving history will come up with an answer that will save this 94-year-old school house for future generations.

Vigo County Public Library

DO NOT CIRCULATE

Community Affairs File

History fills old gym

By ROBERT MITCHELL
Times Staff Writer

It was a warm spring evening as Henry Lee Summer paused on the stage in the Northview gymnasium.

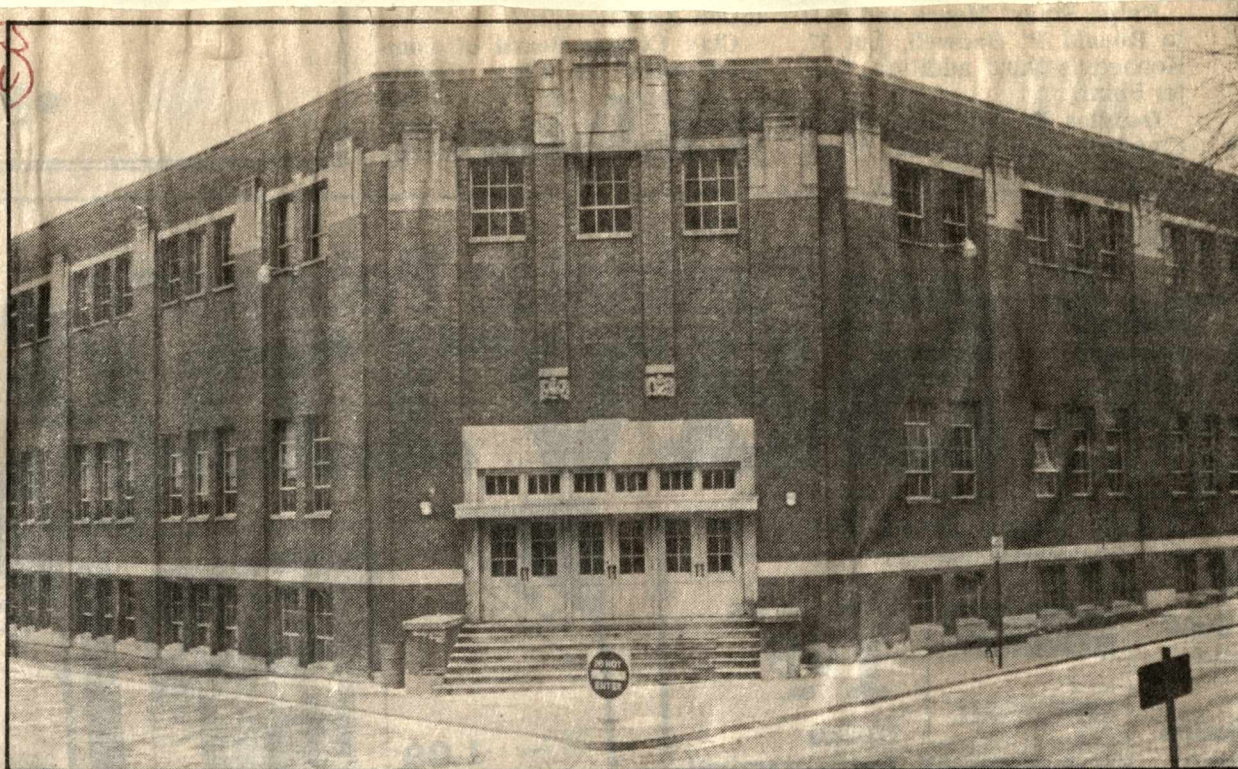
The Brazil rocker gazed up at the ceiling at a stored-away basketball goal. "I remember shooting at that goal right there," he said, pointing to the rafters.

Summer, a Brazil cager in the early 1970s, went on to tell his concert crowd how he enjoyed coming out for pregame warm-ups and hearing the Brazil fight song, of which he hummed a few bars to the delight of the crowd.

"Yeah, I've got a lot of memories of this building," he said.

Saturday night, the last high school boys basketball game will be played in the 59-year-old Brazil/Northview gym when 15th-ranked Bloomfield comes calling.

The fabled gym will exit with a small ceremony, in marked contrast to its opening amidst parade and pageantry — and yes, basketball. School officials plan to mark the occasion, but with a lot less fanfare than in 1929.



Finale

This is the view many people will have Saturday night when they walk up to the Northview gymnasium for the last varsity basketball game at the historic structure. Bloomfield will provide the opposition when the Knights play their final home game of the 1987-88 season there. Future Northview

squads will play in the school's new facility on SR 340. Located on the corner of Washington and Blaine streets, the old Brazil High School gymnasium, was built in 1928 and dedicated Jan. 2, 1929. (Times photo by Steve Krah)

Community Affairs File

Vigo County Public Library

REFERENCE
DO NOT CIRCULATE

THE QUIET Friday and Saturday nights that follow each basketball season will serve as a stark reminder of the dreams realized and crushed under its roof. Besides basketball, it was the site of commencements, proms, concerts, religious crusades, luncheons and even roller skating.

But through the silence, the memories will be heard loud and clear.

"When they built that gym in 1929, that was the finest one in this area," said Clay County historian Bob Moore, who led cheers for Brazil the night the gym was dedicated. "All the schools that came here to play were awed by this wonderful gym Brazil had."

The land the gym sits on is part of the former Benjamin F. Shattuck farm. Moore recalls that no heavy equipment existed during construction of the gym

and earth had to be hauled away in horse-drawn wagons.

The building was dedicated on Jan. 2, 1929 followed by Brazil playing Greencastle in junior high and varsity basketball. Brazil's varsity beat Greencastle, 35-31.

THE SCHOOL band presented a concert and a spirited invocation was given by Dr. S. S. Aikman. Following the prayer, the large crowd erupted in ovation.

"I never heard such an ovation after a prayer," Moore recalled. "They really blew the lid off that gym."

Brazil Mayor James D. Carpenter, Superintendent Charles P. Keller, school board member William E. Carpenter and alumni and citizens also spoke at the dedication.

Arthur L. Trester, secretary of the Indiana Athletic Association, was in attendance and said, "A gym should be dedicated as a public school building, for the use of boys and girls. Brazil's new gym is not built like a barn and will last us for a long time."

Yell leaders led cheers for the other county teams in attendance from Clay City, Ashboro, Bowling Green, Staunton, Van Buren, Coalmont and Cory.

Original plans called for the outside of the building to stretch 137 feet in length by 120 feet in

width. It included 250 opera chairs, which were later replaced, and a 48-foot by 24-foot stage.

THE FLOOR was 92 feet by 80 feet when the portable bleachers were removed.

Several classrooms were also included in the building, which survived a 1945 fire that destroyed the original adjacent junior high. The gym, however, sustained only smoke damage.

Moore recalls shortly after the gym was built that the basketball floor began to dry-rot because it had been installed directly upon earth. The floor was raised to allow air circulation, which accounts for its high-setting even today.

Before the floor was replaced years later, citizens were allowed to go in and roller skate on the old floor, Moore said.

When the gym first opened it was the envy of nearly all visiting squads and a source of pride for the community, Moore said.

Bill Egloff, who played for Brazil in two straight "Sweet Sixteen" appearances in 1934 and 1935, recalled that he and his teammates played in several small gyms on the road and were proud of their homecourt.

"**IT WAS** fairly new when I played in it," said Egloff, now retired and living in Min-

neapolis, Minn. "We thought it was great, just wonderful. Some of those little gyms were awful, so we thought we had it pretty good."

Jack Reece and his Cory teammates beat Brazil three times in two years in the gym and won the 1947 sectional on its floor. He said the Apple Boys enjoyed their trips north.

"That gym has a lot of character, we always enjoyed coming up there," Reece said. "When you came to Brazil, you really walked into a palace."

One of Reece's teammates on the 1947 Cory team was Joe Thomas, who also coached his share of games in the building in later years.

"It was the biggest gym in this area for many, many years," Thomas recalled. "It was also the nicest for many, many miles. A lot of important games were played there through the years."

"It's served its purpose very well."

KENNY CRABB, now a school administrator, said through his experiences with the schools, he will be happy to see students move into a new gymnasium next year at the new Northview High School.

"I have a lot of fond memories of ball games and good times in

that gym, but I'm happy we're going to a new one," he said.

Crabb was a member of the Brazil team that captured the prestigious Wabash Valley Tournament championship in 1943 and was runner-up in 1944.

Crabb said a game he'll never forget that took place in the gym occurred when Pete Mount, father of Rick Mount, brought his Lebanon team to Brazil for a one-point win during the World War II years.

Mack Danhour, who died in World War II, was a star on that Brazil team.

Former Superintendent Jesse Pitts was principal at Brazil from 1962 to 1981, and he too is glad students are headed for a new gym.

"IT'S KIND of nostalgic, but a great day too," Pitts said of Saturday's last game. "Next year the kids will move into nicer facilities."

"A lot of good basketball took place there, though. Stories will be told for years about the coaches and players that played there."

Pitts said the game he will always remember concerning the historic gym occurred in 1967 when a 14-7 Brazil squad upset 21-0 Cloverdale 63-58 in the sectional.

The Clovers had been to the Final Four the year before and were highly favored.

"It was one of the best, hardest-played games to occur in that gym," Pitts said. "It seems like we had every seat packed. We had people sitting on the inner edge of the balcony with their feet hanging over. You talk about Hoosier Hysteria — that was the height of it."

Harriet Hicks, who has taken tickets at the gym since she began teaching at Brazil in 1945, also has fond memories of that game. As the Cloverdale fans filed in, Hicks said, they talked of the defense they were going to employ the following week in the regional against Terre Haute Garfield.

"THEY DIDN'T need to worry about it," Hicks said. "It just shows you take every game as it comes."

As it turned out, it was Brazil that met Garfield the next week in the regional, with the Purple Eagles ending Brazil's season, 64-53.

Hicks was born in Brazil, but her family moved to Indianapolis when she was 2. She moved back at age 12, but often visited her grandfather in Brazil in the interim and watched construction of the gym.

Hicks said she remembers the 13-team sectionals made up of teams from Clay and Owen counties that often took three days to complete.

"We used to have some red-hot times," Hicks said. "There was seldom an empty seat during tournaments."

Crowds were also large whenever Brazil, Staunton or Van Buren took the floor against each other, Hicks said.

"When we did meet them, the rivalry was very, very keen," Hicks said. "There was plenty of enthusiasm. The air got a little blue sometimes."

THE LARGEST crowd Hicks every saw at the gym was when undefeated Garfield and 6-9 Clyde Lovellette visited in 1947 and thumped Brazil 50-26. Hicks

said she and several other observers stood on stools to try and see over the crowd estimated at 3,000, but her view was still obstructed.

"I saw the top of Lovellette's head, anyway," Hicks said.

Other moments Hicks will not forget are a power outage that lasted several minutes during a game against Patricksburg in the 1950s and breaking up a fight between a Van Buren and Staunton student.

Among the players and coaches she remembers well through the years are Harold "Babe" Wheeler, Walter Leifheit Jr., Harold Dean, Jim Smith, Jim Boor, Jim Ferry, John and Jerry Anderson, Tom Butwin, Dave Bussing, Joe and Tommy Grissom, George Harris, Bill Blakemore, Lester Wyndham and Dud Whitman.

Hicks plans on continuing to take tickets at the new gym.

"I'VE ALWAYS enjoyed working the games, for the most part it's been fun," Hicks said. "I wouldn't do it if I didn't enjoy it. It will seem strange not to go to the basketball games there anymore."

Lucia Pierce, a teacher at Brazil from 1920 to 1965 and another 12 years as a substitute, helped Hicks take tickets and also was in charge of several proms held in the gym.

"I never missed a game in all the 57 years," she said. "I attended every game that was possible to go to. I saw many, many full gymnasiums."

Pierce, whose father Elmer was in charge of steel construction when the gym was being built, helped raise the \$4,202.08 to build the structure by selling newspapers, stationary, neckties "and anything we could get our hands on."

"Everybody in town had a necktie. We worked like little dogs," she said. "I sold more tickets and made more money than any teacher in the whole Brazil High School."

Pierce and her students also held 10-cent talent shows and often raised \$100 a night.

"WE WERE real proud of that gym," Pierce said. "It was wonderful."

Harry Sherer, a teacher and principal at Brazil Junior High from 1948 to 1962, replaced the legendary Wheeler in the mid-50s as head basketball coach.

Sherer, who still faithfully attends games and sits on the stage, said the gym has its advantages such as a less-than-regulation length floor and fans being allowed to sit so close to the action, which affects visiting teams when they try and in-bound the ball.

"It's a great place for basketball," Sherer said. "I've seen some good games there. I've seen a lot of good ball players, both visiting and our hometown boys, go through there."

"Times changes, but it's still a great place. I hate to see an era come to a close . . . but that comes with change."

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Fate pondered

The Odd Fellows Temple, 16-30 S. Eighth St., is one of 61 structures downtown which will be

considered by the Indiana Review Board for Historic Preservation April 20.

Staff Photo/Bob Poynter

City ponders next move toward condemned building

By ROBIN SCHULBERG
Staff Writer

MAR 30 1983

Following Hulman & Co.'s refusal to renovate the condemned Odd Fellows Building earlier this month, city officials are pondering what to do with the structure.

Demolition costs and protection afforded by historic preservation designation may keep the building off the agenda of the city's next demolition hearing. Instead, the city will talk with Hulman officials about the company's plans for the block northeast of Eighth and Ohio streets, Mayor P. Pete Chalos said Tuesday.

The city condemned the building Jan. 4. George Brattain, attorney for Hulman, informed the city March 11 that it is economically unfeasible to bring the building up to city and state codes.

The U.S. Park Service determined that the building was eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places in late 1981, according to the Indiana Department of Resources' Division of Historic Preservation.

That means federal funds can't be used to demolish the building without permission from the state and a high-level federal council, Nancy J. Long, architectural historian with the state, said.

The process of winning that approval could take two years, she said.

In addition, Chalos said costs of building demolition would be prohibitive for the city. The city would have to spend a full year's allocation of federal community development funds targeted for demolition to do the job, he said.

DO NOT
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REFERENCE

JAN 6 1983 Community Affairs File

Historic Landmarks (w/)

City condemns Oddfellows Building, citing structure 'fire trap'

Terre Haute officials have condemned a downtown building purchased by Hulman & Co. last fall and say they will put the building on a demolition hearing agenda unless the owner informs the city of its plans.

"Sitting there as it is, it's a fire trap," Catherine M. McCullough, city housing inspector, said Tuesday. "We're trying to put an end to abandoned buildings."

The three-story building at Eighth and Ohio streets was purchased by Hulman & Co. Sept. 17 from two companies headed by William A. Valentine. Ms. McCullough said that she is writing certified letters to both

Valentine and Joseph A. Cloutier, vice president of Hulman, to find out whether the owner will rehabilitate the 1908 structure or tear it down.

The owner has 10 days to contact the building inspection department after receipt of the letter, she said. Otherwise, the building will be scheduled for a demolition hearing.

Letters are being sent to both Valentine and Cloutier because ownership information on Vigo County computerized tax records hasn't been updated to indicate the Hulman purchase.

Ms. McCullough said that the building presents a health hazard because of pigeons roosting inside and a fire

hazard because of the substandard electrical wiring and piles of paper trash. Except for the blood donor center on the ground floor, she said it has been vacant since 1981.

Ms. McCullough said that she talked with Valentine by phone before condemning the building Tuesday, but was unsuccessful in efforts to talk to Hulman representatives.

Cloutier said Wednesday that he was unaware that the building had been condemned, but would contact the city. Although Hulman has no present plans to rehabilitate the building, he said it has been boarded up and the trash removed.

"It's in better shape than before,"

Cloutier said.

About two months ago, a fire on the second floor damaged three offices, James R. Brown, chief inspector for the Fire Department, said. Agreeing with Ms. McCullough's characterization of the building as a "fire trap," Brown said the building first was condemned in 1981, but no further action was taken by the city at the time. Since then, he said that he had seen no improvements other than work done on the ground floor by Blood Products Inc.

County records that the building and land have an assessed valuation of \$49,060.

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Vigo County Public Library

Office Bar

Historic Landmarks (WU)
Serving a bit of Terre Haute history
Friends turn classic building into restaurant
Indpls Star 7/19/87

By SUSAN CRITTENDEN
STAR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Terre Haute, Ind. — In the past century, the historic building in downtown Terre Haute has at times been a harness store, trading store, dime store, restaurant and tavern.

During the 1930s and 1940s, the upstairs rooms in the two-story structure were used for illegal gambling. High rollers were protected by two-way mirrors and bolted, padded doors.

Now, a nurse practitioner and a real estate agent who are longtime friends are turning the historic downtown building into a swank restaurant — one in which former President Gerald R. Ford has made reservations to dine when he visits Terre Haute in October.

When The Chase opens in August, it will be a tribute to the foresight, acumen and interest of Rebecca Johnson and Beverly W. Cristee.

"A dozen years back, we began crawling in and out of old buildings. We always hate to see them torn down," said Cristee, 49, who owned an antique store before she started selling real estate.

Nearly 10 years ago, the pair considered buying the former YWCA when it was slated for demolition. But climbing interest rates scared them off.

Then came what they call "the California experience."

Johnson, along with her family, moved to San Francisco to work on her doctorate. At the same time, Cristee and her husband, who is a physician, took jobs in Santa Barbara, Calif.

"It was our experiences on the West Coast and the maturity we gained that helped us see the opportunity when we returned to Terre Haute," said Johnson, 44. She added that the community seemed changed and ready, too.

"The senior (community) leadership had changed. They had traveled and been educated. The banks had changed, too, and seemed more liberal. The public wanted more, too; and generally we found a 'can do' attitude," Cristee said.

In October, the women purchased The Office Bar in the heart of downtown Terre Haute for \$50,000. Built before 1870, the Italianate-style brick building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The partners decided on The Chase as the name for their restaurant because "it sounds classy and uptown. My husband and I have stayed at places named The Chase and eaten at others with that name, and they were always nice. The name is regal," Cristee said.

"We have put together a group of investors that represents a cross-section of the community. They helped put the business plan together," she said.

One of the 10 investors is Dan Hicks, 24, who joined the venture shortly after Cristee and Johnson purchased the building.

"Our ideas were compatible. I've had five years experience in restaurant business and three in management," said Hicks, a Terre Haute native.

The group has hired two chefs — one came from France for an interview and liked the community, the other came from San Francisco.

"It will be elegant," Cristee said of the restaurant. "There will be seating for 140, 70 downstairs and another 70 in three private rooms upstairs. Dinners will be from \$12.95 to \$22.95 and we'll serve modest lunches."

Vigo County Public Library

REFERENCE
DO NOT CIRCULATE

Community Affairs File

Office Bar

New owners hope to turn Office into restaurant

Historic landmarks (WV)
Is OCT 02 1986
By George W. Wardell
Tribune-Star Staff Reporter

A historic building housing the Office Tavern at 810 Wabash Ave. has been sold and will be converted into a restaurant, the seller and buyer have acknowledged.

George Oltean said he sold the business Monday to Beverly W. Cristee and Rebecca Johnson for \$45,000 plus fixtures, bringing the price to nearly \$50,000.

"They made me an offer," Oltean said Tuesday. "And I took it. I had five offers lined up for the tavern."

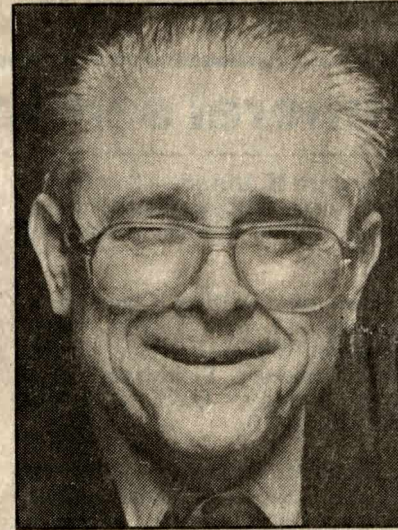
Johnson issued a prepared statement Wednesday, saying that she and Cristee, both of whom recently lived in California, returned to Terre Haute, where their interest in historic preservation was renewed.

"The purchase of the Office bar was made in an effort to preserve and renovate a building that had played a colorful role in local history," Johnson said. "They [Cristee and Johnson] presently are considering various options for the use of the two-story building, which is probably most ideally suited as a restaurant."

The Italianate-style building constructed in about 1880 is listed in the National Register of Historic Places as possessing outstanding significance on the national, state or local level for history, architecture, environment and/or integrity.

Oltean said the buyers have had at least five contractors look at the building.

"They told me they plan to renovate the entire building inside and out, top to bottom [to make] it



GEORGE OLTEAN
Calling it quits

one of the most beautiful places in the Wabash Valley," Oltean said.

Christee declined comment on Oltean's assertion that \$200,000 would be spent to renovate the building.

Oltean rented the building in 1936 and bought it in 1944, when he typically sold 50 cases of beer a night at 10 cents a bottle.

"Now, I think I've had a good night if I sell five cases," he said.

Oltean, a silent partner in the old Flamingo Room at Ninth Street and Wabash Avenue, also had been a partner in Club Idaho housed in the old Idaho Theater building. Oltean now is the owner of Discount Furniture at 800 N. 25th St.

He said he went into the Toasty Shop on Tuesday morning to hear the gossip, and, "The gossip turned out to be me."

Vigo County Public Library

Community Affairs File

REFERENCE
DO NOT CIRCULATE

Ohio Blvd.

City pushes park, Ohio for Register

Is NOV 07 1986
By Dave Delaney
Tribune-Star Staff Reporter

Efforts have begun to get Deming Park and part of Ohio Boulevard onto the National Register of Historic Places.

"This will give recognition to the city," said Anne Tillotson, special events coordinator for the Terre Haute Park and Recreation Department.

The section of Ohio Boulevard being nominated is from 19th Street to Fruitridge Avenue, which is where the park begins. The boulevard contains 24 islands, water fountain and an entrance wall to the Deming subdivision at 20th Street.

Historic Landmarks (WV)
The area in the register would include 1.5 miles of Ohio Boulevard whose islands are populated with maple and sycamore trees. The boulevard was initially developed by Demas Deming Jr., the son of a prominent early Terre Haute settler.

When it was built, Ohio Boulevard was thought to be the widest boulevard for its length in the United States. Houses built along the boulevard were built in the 1920s and 1930s and are mostly of the Tudor Revival, Colonial Revival and Mediterranean styles.

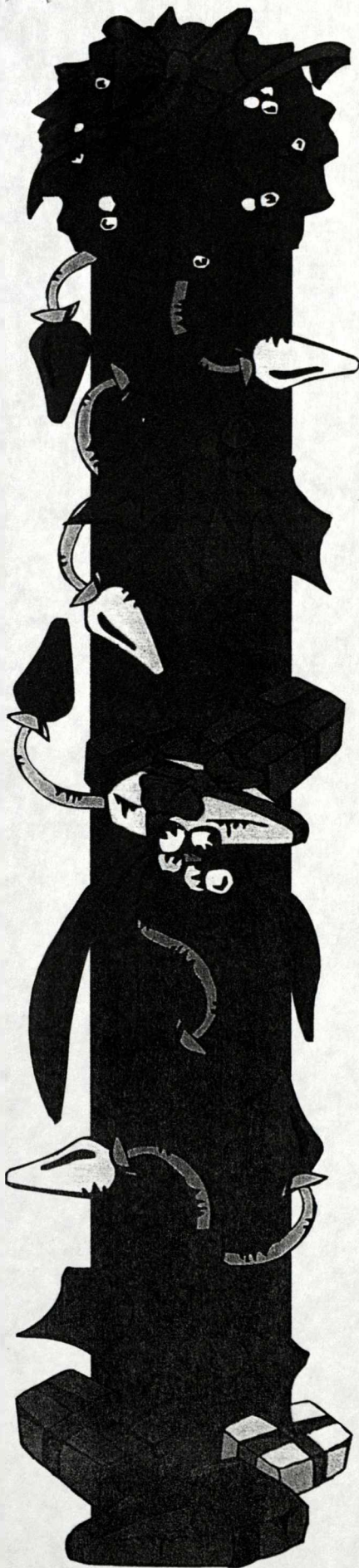
"I don't know when we'll hear from the Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology on this," said Tillotson, "but I'm optimistic about it."

Vigo County Public Library

Community Affairs File

REFERENCE
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Welcome to Casa Urbana in the Ohio Building

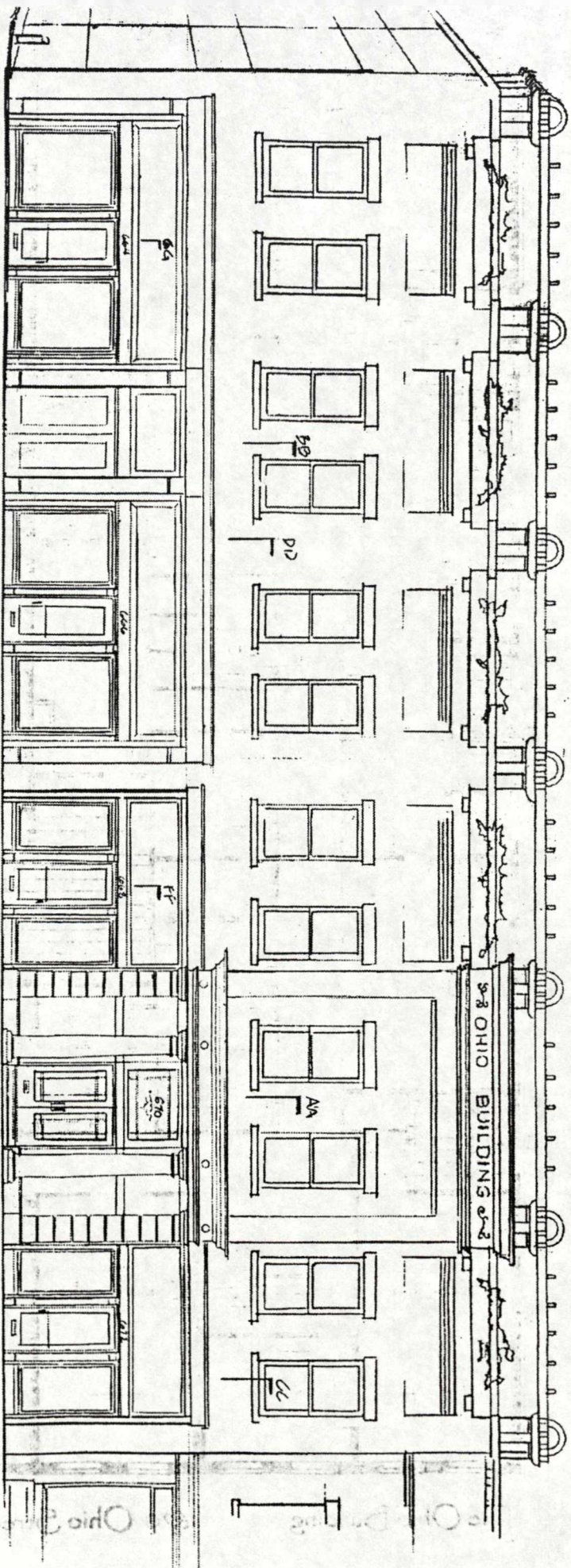


VIGO COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY
ONE LIBRARY SQUARE

TERRE HAUTE, INDIANA 47807

- The Ohio Building was originally two buildings.
- In 1906 the German American Trust was the first structure built in 1906-1907. This was the east half of the building.
- In 1907 William "Buff" Kaufman a local grocer began building the western half of the building.
- In 1913 the first advertisement for the Hotel Tuller appeared in the City Directory.
- There were a total of 40 rooms in the hotel.
- In 1950 the Goodie Shop Cafeteria moved into the first floor of the building and the hotel closed and was sealed off.
- Construction on "Casa Urbana" began on May 17th of 2004.
- Over 361 tons of material have been removed – this does not include 12 layers of roofing or any of the restaurant equipment.
- Casa Urbana is 13,000 square feet. The garage, storage area on the first floor and basement add an additional 5,000 square feet.
- There are 7 HVAC units with seven zones. Plus a forced air heater in the garage, and a separate unit in the penthouse.
- There are 5 indoor fireplaces and 1 on the roof.
- There are 4 full and 5 half baths.
- There are 3 different species of wood used in the flooring: Pine, oak, and walnut.
- The entry stairs have 23 steps.
- Under the hardwood floors in the east building is there is second hardwood floor. (When the second story was converted to a hotel the plumbing was installed on top of the existing floor and a new floor was placed on top)
- The tulip globes in the Ballroom are original to the building. (Except for the 8 globes in the 4 corners).

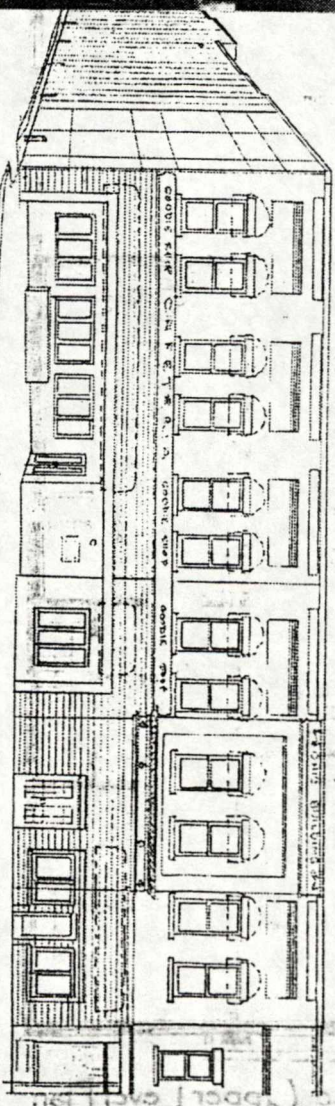
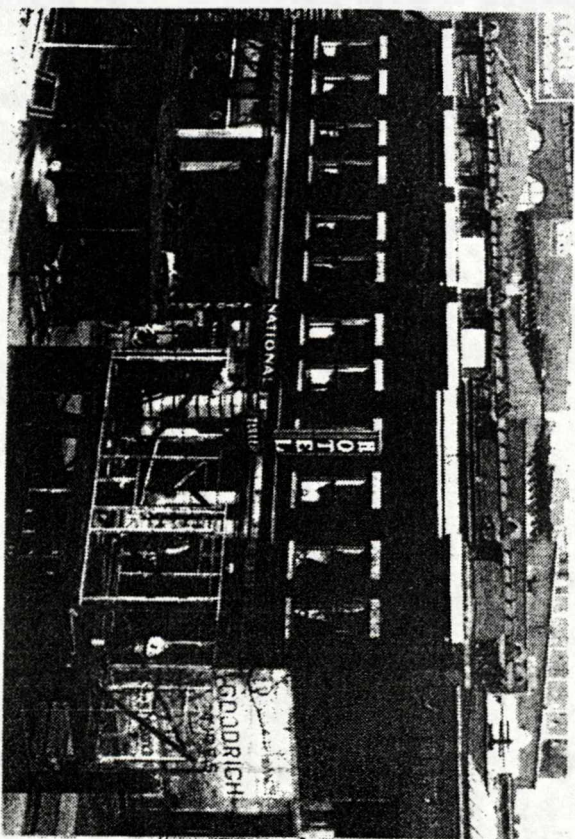
Thank you for visiting Casa Urbana,
David J. Adams and Al Ruckriegel



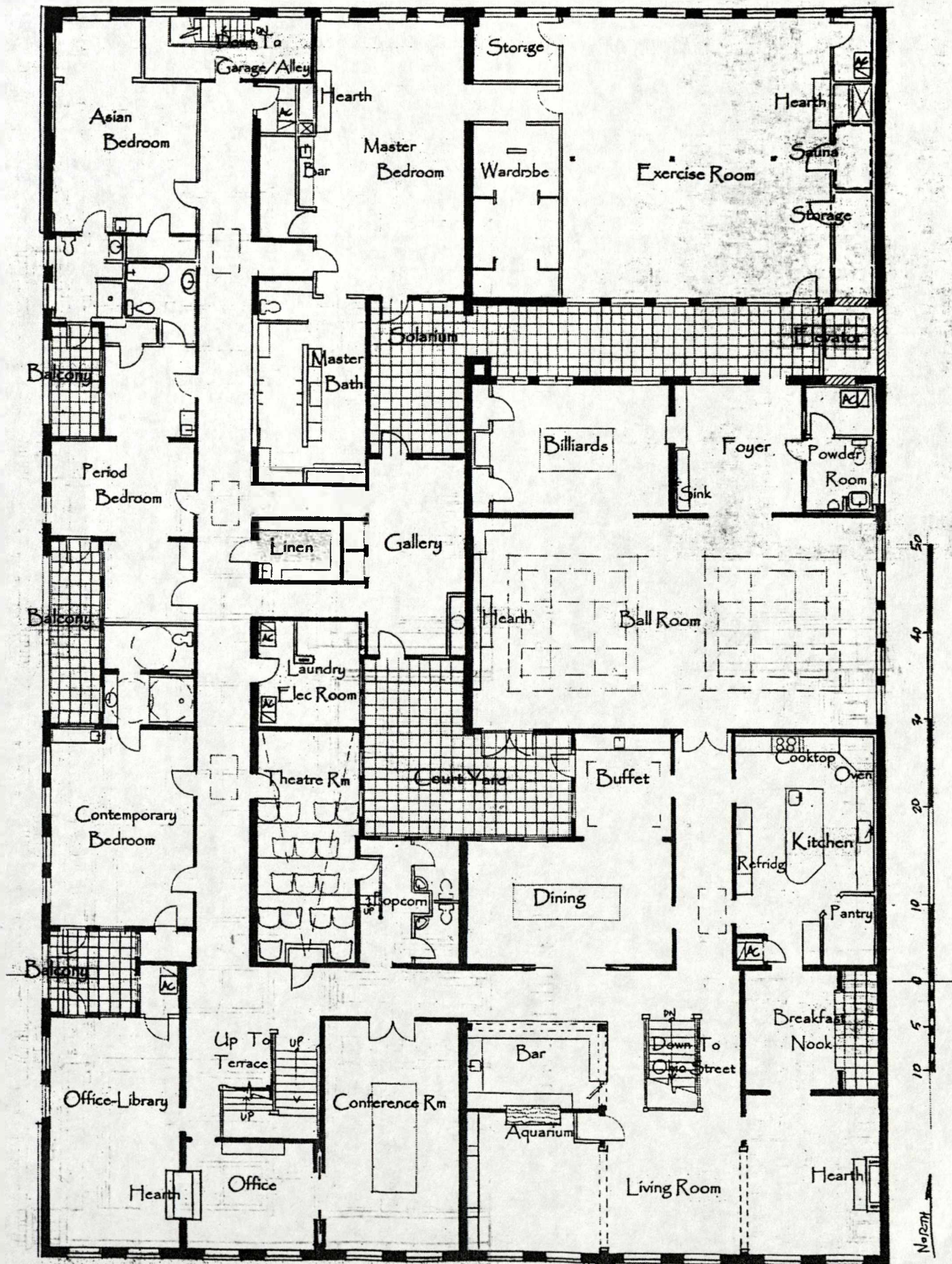
The Ohio Building

670 Ohio Street

Proposed South Elevation



SOUTH ELEVATION - EXISTING 670 OHIO ST.



The Ohio Building

670 Ohio Street

Proposed Upper Level Plan



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TERRE HAUTE, INDIANA

Historic Landmarks (W.V.)

Ohio Building

CASA URBANA

THE OHIO BUILDING

MEETING & BANQUET CENTER

672 OHIO STREET

TERRE HAUTE IN

SEE: RESTAURANTS (W.V.)



After 15 months of labor, David Adams claims enduring satisfaction with his renovation of the Ohio Building in Terre Haute with partner Al Ruckriegel. "We wouldn't do anything differently. It was worth every hour and every drop of sweat."

Urban pioneers go upscale downtown

Jeremy Risen, Community Preservation Specialist, Western Regional Office

After staring at the vacant brick building across the street from their offices for a year, David Adams and Al Ruckriegel decided to take a closer look. Their fateful walkthrough in 2003 sparked a vision that transformed the two-story Ohio Building in downtown Terre Haute into a conference and banquet facility, with a breathtaking loft apartment they call "Casa Urbana."

A stone tablet above the main entrance proclaims the building's name, derived from its location on Ohio Street across from the historic Indiana Theater. A bank in its original incarnation in 1906, the building doubled just a year later when grocer William "Buff" Kaufmann expanded it westward. Fast-forward nearly a century—through a variety of tenants including the Hotel Tuller and local restaurant, the Goodie Shop Cafeteria—to 1998 when a bankruptcy put the Ohio Building in the hands of a bank once again, facing demolition for a parking lot. Terre Haute Landmarks, the local preserva-

tion organization, intervened and Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana provided a grant to help market the building. As it turned out, the saviors were just across the street.

Adams and Ruckriegel lived in Terre Haute's first ranch house, built in 1946, but they had long admired the loft-style living they'd seen in larger cities. They realized that the Ohio Building's size—13,000 square feet per floor—meant it could also accommodate Sidal Inc., their fast-food franchise business. Many original features remained to cement their interest and spark their imaginations, including handsome woodwork and flooring, the old hotel's check-in desk, and a spacious ballroom.

Some less attractive features included the 400 tons of debris, twelve layers of roofing, and a heap of restaurant equipment they hauled from the site. Ruckriegel admits the project—seven days a week for 15 months—took a toll. "We had to make big decisions every day," Adams explains.

The second floor loft—Casa Urbana—offers a homey yet sophisticated urban atmosphere. Warm décor, dark woods, and antiques give the vast residence a clean craftsman-style feel with modern accents that lend a hip, urban edge. The sauna and fitness room, home theater featuring vintage seats from Radio City Music Hall, five fireplaces, and 280-gallon saltwater fish tank make it a one-of-a-kind place. Adams and Ruckriegel wanted room for visitors so they installed four guestrooms, each with its own full bath—modern, but with a nod to the old Hotel Tuller.

With the loss of the Terre Haute House (a 10 Most Endangered hotel demolished in 2005), the Ohio Building offers hope in downtown Terre Haute. The building's bold neo-classical entrance opens to upscale ground-level conference and banquet facilities that are already in demand. Adams and Ruckriegel make the entire building available for functions—including the residential upper floor. (Historic Landmarks members got to see the place when the pair generously hosted our western regional Holiday Open House in December.)

"Since we opened, we've noticed more interest in downtown buildings here," observes David Adams. "No one expects to find this sort of urban, upscale place in Terre Haute. New York and Chicago yes, but not Terre Haute. Once people see the possibilities, we won't be the only pioneers."